

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested. After entry of the foregoing amendment, Claims 1-2, 4-6, 8-20, and 23-25 remain pending in the present application. No new matter has been added.

By way of summary, the Office Action presents the following issues: the Office objected to Claims 1 and 19 as containing informalities; Claims 1-2, 4-5, 9-12, 20, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Alain et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publ'n No. 2003/0110131 A1, hereinafter "Alain") in view of Tanaka et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publ'n No. 2002/0114466 A1, hereinafter "Tanaka"); Claims 6-8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Alain in view of Tanaka and Oho et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publ'n No. 2002/0184515 A1, hereinafter "Oho"); Claims 13-14, 16-19, and 24-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Oho in view of Alain and Narin et al. (U.S. Patent Application Publ'n No. 2004/0158731 A1, hereinafter "Narin"); and Claim 15 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Oho in view of Alain, Narin, and O'Neil (U.S. Patent Application Publ'n No. 2002/0085490 A1).

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

The Office objected to Claims 1 and 19 as containing informalities. In this regard, it does not appear as though the Office has interpreted the features of Claims 1 and 19 consistent with 35 U.S.C. § 112, sixth paragraph. The Office is respectfully referred to MPEP § 2181. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objections to Claims 1 and 19.¹

¹ The amendments to Claims 1 and 19 are not intended to address the alleged informalities.

REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-2, 4-5, 9-12, 20, and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Alain in view of Tanaka. In light of the several grounds of rejection on the merits, independent Claims 1, 20, and 23 have been amended to clarify the claimed inventions and to thereby more clearly patentably define over the applied references.

Amended Claim 1 recites an information device, including, in part,

means . . . for receiving key information . . . upon a determination that fewer than a predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information . . . ; and

means for reading out the license based on the encrypted content, for reading out the grouped device identification information based on the license, [and] for reading out the key information based on the grouped device identification information

Applicants respectfully submit that Alain, Tanaka, and O'Neil fail to disclose or suggest those features.

Alain concerns a method for providing security to digital assets, in which “a user block including the current user is . . . added into the header.”² Applicants respectfully submit that Alain fails to disclose or suggest “means . . . for receiving key information . . . upon a determination that fewer than a predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information . . . ; and means for reading out the license based on the encrypted content, for reading out the grouped device identification information based on the license, [and] for reading out the key information based on the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Tanaka concerns an information processing method, in which “If the number of check-out operations (N1) is found to be smaller than the maximum permissible number of

² Alain, para. [0161].

check-out operations (N2), . . . the CPU 21 acquires the leaf key”³ Applicants respectfully submit that Tanaka fails to disclose or suggest “means . . . for receiving key information . . . upon a determination that fewer than a predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information . . . ; and means for reading out the license based on the encrypted content, for reading out the grouped device identification information based on the license, [and] for reading out the key information based on the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

O’Neil concerns conferencing network resource management, in which “If it is determined . . . that sufficient network resources are available to complete the requested conference call, then . . . appropriate invitations may be transmitted to conference invitees”⁴ It is respectfully submitted that O’Neil fails to disclose or suggest “means . . . for receiving key information . . . upon a determination that fewer than a predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information . . . ; and means for reading out the license based on the encrypted content, for reading out the grouped device identification information based on the license, [and] for reading out the key information based on the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 1.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Alain, Tanaka and O’Neil, taken alone or in combination fail to disclose or suggest “means . . . for receiving key information . . . upon a determination that fewer than a predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information . . . ; and means for reading out the license based on the encrypted content, for reading out the grouped device identification information based on the license, [and] for reading out the key information based on the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, it is respectfully

³ Tanaka, para. [0278].

⁴ O’Neil, para. [0030].

submitted that independent Claim 1 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably distinguishes over any proper combination of Alain, Tanaka, and O'Neil.

Applicants further submit that independent Claims 20 and 23 are allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with regard to Claim 1 and for the more detailed features presented in those claims.

Claims 13-14, 16-19, and 24-25 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Oho in view of Alain and Narin. In light of the several grounds of rejection on the merits, independent Claims 13, 19, and 24-25 have been amended to clarify the claimed inventions and to thereby more clearly patentably define over the applied references.

Claim 13 recites an information server, including, in part, “means for providing key information, . . . upon the means for determining determining that fewer than the predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information” Applicants respectfully submit that Oho, Alain, Narin, and O'Neil fail to disclose or suggest those features.

Oho concerns a rights management unit, in which “the user information management section . . . determines whether the extracted device identifier number Ndv is a predetermined maximum value Vul or larger,” where “the maximum value Vul indicates how many units, at the maximum, the user . . . is allowed to register”⁵ According to Oho, if it is determined that Ndv is not Vul or larger, “the registration completion generation section . . . generates . . . a registration completion notice Dsc as shown in FIG. 19B, and transmits it”⁶

That is, Oho merely describes transmitting a registration completion notice if a device identifier number is not the maximum number of units a user is allowed to register, or larger. Oho does not disclose or suggest “means for providing key information, . . . upon the means for determining determining that fewer than the predetermined number of information

⁵ Oho, para. [0179].

⁶ Id., para. [0180].

devices are associated with the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 13.

As discussed above, Alain concerns a method, in which “a user block including the current user is . . . added into the header.”⁷ It is respectfully submitted that Alain fails to disclose or suggest “means for providing key information, . . . upon the means for determining determining that fewer than the predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 13.

Narin concerns a digital rights management system, in which “generated licenses are returned to the requesting entity”⁸ Applicants respectfully submit that Narin fails to disclose or suggest “means for providing key information, . . . upon the means for determining determining that fewer than the predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 13.

Further, as described above, O’Neil merely describes transmitting invitations to conference invitees. It is respectfully submitted that O’Neil fails to disclose or suggest “means for providing key information, . . . upon the means for determining determining that fewer than the predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 13.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that Oho, Alain, Narin, and O’Neil taken alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest “means for providing key information, . . . upon the means for determining determining that fewer than the predetermined number of information devices are associated with the grouped device identification information,” as recited in amended Claim 13. It is further submitted that independent Claim 13 (and all

⁷ Alain, para. [0161].

⁸ Narin, para. [0105].

associated dependent claims) patentably distinguishes over any proper combination of Oho, Alain, Narin, and O'Neil.

Applicants additionally submit that amended Claims 19 and 24-25 are allowable for the same reasons as discussed above with regard to Claim 13 and for the more detailed features presented by those claims.

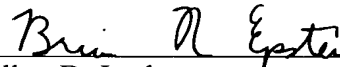
Further, it is submitted that Oho fails to remedy the above-noted deficiencies in Claim 1. It is therefore submitted that the rejection of dependent Claims 6-8 is moot.

CONCLUSION

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the foregoing comments, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is patentably distinguished over the cited art and is in condition for allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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